COMIC BOOK LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

DEFENDER

BACK TO SCHOOL with COMICS!

CREATORS ON CENSORSHIP!

RAINA SPEAKS OUT!

MAD VS. THE FBI!

Issue 3
Fall 2015

Loux

Director's Note

Ask anyone with a little gray hair what comics they brought to school as a kid, and you'll hear plenty of stories that end in tears. It wasn't so long ago that bringing comics to class was met with disapproval, confiscation, or worse. In "Back to School with Comics" on page 12, Betsy Gomez shows how the world has changed, with comics now being part of the curriculum in many states. But, as the rest of our issue demonstrates, there are still far too many incidents of censorship affecting comics in schools.

First up, we return to New Mexico, where a final verdict has been rendered in "The Curious Case of Palomar." Months after CBLDF spoke out for Gilbert Hernandez's critically acclaimed graphic novel, it is back in the library at Rio Rancho High School, with the caveat that students under 18 need a parent's signature to check it out. Correspondence uncovered by a FOIA request reveals that the situation could have been much worse: The book was almost removed without regard for district policy or the First Amendment. Maren Williams tells the tale on page 3.

The summer was full of book censorship, but no story was stranger than an attempted ban on four graphic novels at Crafton Hills College in Yucaipa, California. 20-year-old student Tara Shultz and her parents protested the inclusion of *Fun Home*, *Persepolis*, *Y: The Last Man*, and *Sandman* in an elective graphic novel course, demanding the school place a disclaimer on the course if the books couldn't be "eradicated from the system." Read more about this case and other recent censorship news starting on page 4.

Raina Telgemeier took time out of her busy summer to talk about her reaction to the controversy surrounding her graphic novel *Drama*, which was the tenth most frequently challenged book of 2014. In "Dramatic Reading," starting on page 6, she reveals what it's like to be one of the most banned authors in America, why she thinks LGBT content is so important, and how she creates her stories. Alison Bechdel, Neil Gaiman, Frank Miller, Alan Moore, Ariel Schrag, Jeff Smith, and Marjane Satrapi join Telgemeier in providing their perspectives on facing censorship in "Fighting Words," starting on page 8.

Perhaps no other magazine received more scorn in American classrooms than *Mad*, but teachers weren't the only people up in arms over its content. "When the FBI Got MAD," on page 10, reveals how J. Edgar Hoover's Agency scrutinized the magazine, including a visit to their offices in 1957.

Finally, CBLDF's own D.A. Cox gives a tour of the 2015 *CBLDF Liberty Annual*, a loving tribute to the bygone era of American satire magazines, featuring some of comics' funniest creators. Details on how to get your copy are on page 14, along with all the latest CBLDF premiums we've gathered to thank you for your support!

—Charles Brownstein, Executive Director

CBLDF thanks our Guardian Members:

James Wood Bailey, Grant Geissman, Philip Harvey, Joseph H. King, and Midwest Comic Book Association.

CBLDF's education program made possible with the generous support of the Gaiman Foundation and supporters like you!

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After a FOIA request, emails show that administrators in the Rio Rancho school district were woefully unacquainted with—or willing to completely ignore—their district's challenge policies, not to mention basic First Amendment rights.

Although we got word that *Palomar* by Gilbert Hernandez would be returning to high school library shelves in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, after a parent's challenge was resolved, a report from Albuquerque radio station KUNM indicates that things may not be so straightforward. School district emails obtained via FOIA request show that the book was removed from the computerized library catalog well before a review committee decided it should not be banned from the high school collection.

The emails released to KUNM reporter Rita Daniels begin with a February 26 message from Rio Rancho High School librarian Brenna McCandless to principal Richard Von Ancken. McCandless reports that parent Catrenna Lopez came to the school library to register a complaint about *Palomar*, which was added to the collection by a previous librarian. McCandless gives her assessment:

> *The content is quite adult. The parent has the book at the moment, but I've already removed it from the collection because it's definitely not something we should have... I attempted to find some reviews just to see why it might have been included and the only thing we could find was a review from Library Journal that stated it was "Highly recommended, especially for libraries with Latino populations," so that might have been the justification for purchase. I already spoke with the mother and let her know I shared her concern and thanked her for bringing it to our attention so that we could rectify the situation.*

Ominously, McCandless also told Von Ancken that the rest of the library's graphic novels were now under scrutiny:

> *We're currently going through the graphic novel collection by hand just to make sure nothing else has slipped through the cracks, so if [Lopez] wants to know what else is being done, we're taking care of it.*

McCandless' hasty response to a parent's verbal challenge stands in sharp contrast to the procedure outlined in Rio Rancho Public Schools policy 425A, which reads:

> *Review of questioned ("challenged") materials will be treated objectively, unemotionally, and as a routine matter. Criticisms of print and non-print materials must be submitted in writing on a Request for Reconsideration of Library Materials form obtained from the librarian at the library/media center where the material is housed and submitted to the Superintendent of schools. The Request must be signed and include specific information as to author, title, publisher, and definite citation of objection.*

Palomar © Gilbert Hernandez. Published by Fantagraphics Books.

Ironically, *Palomar* likely would have been quietly removed from the Rio Rancho High School collection without CBLDF ever hearing about it—except that Lopez also took the story to local TV station KOAT, which aired a ludicrously biased news report, calling the book "sexual, graphic, and not suitable for children." CBLDF covered KOAT's report on February 27, citing the school's challenge policy and urging RRPS to follow it.

When the district email thread picked up again a week later, top administrators had become very concerned with following the challenge policy, which entails forming a review committee to consider the book. Associate Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction Carl Leppelman wrote on March 5:

> *I am requesting that a committee be convened as soon as possible to review the book and make a recommendation to [Superintendent] Dr. Cleveland. Please follow policy 425A. There is normally a form (425b) completed by the person who is challenging the book. It is not prudent to have the form completed. Instead, contact [RRHS Vice Principal] Sherrie Carver and she will give you the specifics of the concern prior to meeting as a committee.*

Seeing as the book had already been deleted from the system—in violation of policy, of course—Leppelman's directive was met with general confusion from Carver and Executive Director of Secondary Curriculum and Instruction LaJuana Coleman. On March 6, Coleman asked:

> *Can you clarify why a committee needs to be formed? It appears that the book is off the shelf, answers have been provided and case closed, unless I am missing something.*

Carver also expressed doubt that a committee was necessary, since in her view there was "not much to discuss... no question the book needs to be removed from circulation." Leppelman explained that the district was now following the policy after initially failing to do so, but Coleman still had questions:

> *I am sorry, but I am completely lost on this. Are you creating the committee or are you asking me to? Where is the form, why is it not prudent to fill it out, I am not sure I understand at all what is being asked. What is the 'time sensitive' nature? What does that exactly mean?*

Actually, the question of why Leppelman previously said it was "not prudent to have the [challenge] form completed" is quite a good one. In any case, Lopez did finally submit a challenge form on March 12—two weeks after the book had been deleted from the system and four days before the review committee convened to retroactively judge it. When the review committee finally met on March 16 and decided by a 5-3 vote that *Palomar* should not be removed from the high school library, the decision likely came as a surprise to many of the players in this saga, who seemed to take the book's inappropriateness as a given.

Although Palomar will technically be back in the RRHS library this fall, students under 18 will need a parent's signature to check it out. This sets up an access barrier for the vast majority of students based on one parent's complaint. Further, some have expressed some concern over whether the book will ultimately be reshelved—it is currently stored in a locked office. Further, Lopez plans to appeal to the superintendent, who may countermand the review committee's decision. Hopefully, the district will side with the right to read and keep the book.

Maren Williams

News

Crafton Hills College Backs Down on Disclaimer on Graphic Novel Course

After CBLDF joined the National Coalition Against Censorship to urge Crafton Hills College not to require a disclaimer about potentially offensive content on future syllabi for a graphic novel class, the San Bernardino Community College District reversed course and will leave the decision up to individual instructors.

The issue arose after a 20-year-old student and her parents publicly raised objections in May to four graphic novels covered in English 250. Tara Shultz, who is working towards an Associate Degree in English, knew when she began the course in January that it focused on graphic novels, but she "expected Batman and Robin, not pornography." Shultz contacted her parents, and the family challenged the inclusion of four of the ten books taught by Associate Professor Ryan Bartlett: *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi, *Fun Home* by Alison Bechdel, *Y: The Last Man* Vol. 1 by Brian K. Vaughan and Pia Guerra, and *The Sandman* Vol. 2: *The Doll's House* by Neil Gaiman and various artists.

Crafton Hills President Cheryl Marshall initially said the college stood behind Bartlett and the inclusion of the books, but she indicated a partial capitulation in stating that the college would try to avoid such problems in future by requiring a warning on the course syllabus. In the letter that CBLDF signed, NCAC argued that disclaimers pose an obstacle to academic freedom, creating potential for the exclusion of acclaimed literature from coursework over fear of offending students. Fortunately, the community college district agreed and ultimately decided against the disclaimer requirement for Crafton Hills and its other campus, San Bernardino Valley College.

Ninth Circuit Court Finds Constitutional Problems with AZ Law that Censored Mexican American Studies Program

The students and teachers of Tucson's now defunct Mexican American Studies program have been fighting against the Arizona state law that led to the dissolution of the program. Recently, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals issued an opinion that hopefully puts them one step closer to striking it down.

Arce v. Douglas (formerly *Arce v. Huppenthal*) challenges the constitutionality of Arizona Revised Statute § 15-112, a law passed in 2010 by the Arizona legislature that specifically targeted Tucson's acclaimed Mexican American Studies program. Then Arizona Superintendent of Public Instruction John Huppenthal and other conservative politicians in the state argued the program fomented racial hatred, and passage of the law meant the end of the MAS program despite independent assessment that found the program did no such thing and increased student success, especially among Mexican American and Latino students.

The Ninth Circuit determined that one section was in violation of the First Amendment and that two sections did raise some constitutional concerns under the First and 14th Amendments. The opinion does not strike down the law, but the Ninth Circuit has sent the decision back to district court for reconsideration. The prior court had ruled against the students bringing suit on three of the four subsections, dismissing most of their First Amendment claims without evaluating the discriminatory nature of the law. However, the Ninth Circuit is demanding that the lower court now review the student's claims of discrimination.

CENSORSHIP SCORECARD

CBLDF frequently joins coalition efforts to protect the freedom to read comics. Taking an active stand against all instances of censorship curbs precedent that could adversely affect the rights upon which comics readers depend. Here are a few of our latest cases...

Rio Rancho Public Schools, New Mexico

WIN: Rejecting one New Mexico parent's complaint that the highly-regarded graphic novel *Palomar* by Gilbert Hernandez was "child porn," the school board voted to keep the book in a high school library. CBLDF led a coalition that included NCAC in defending the book after it was attacked in a lurid and biased news report from local TV affiliate KOAT, which continued its attack after the decision to keep the book was announced. The win was tempered by news that anyone under 18 must now have written parental permission to check out the book. Further, a FOIA request revealed that the district initially ignored its challenge policy.

Crafton Hills College, California

WIN: In a rare higher education challenge, CBLDF rose to the defense of four graphic novels after a 20-year-old student and her parents tried to get them removed from a graphic novel course. While the college did not capitulate to the ban, they suggested requiring a disclaimer on the course syllabus, which CBLDF strongly opposed. Fortunately, the administration backed down from the requirement, upholding academic freedom.

Duval County, Florida

DEVELOPING: CBLDF joined a Kids' Right to Read-led coalition to defend two children's books being challenged in Duval County, Florida. The children's books in question are *The Librarian of Basra* and *Nasreen's Secret School*, both of which take place in the Middle East and explore issues of free speech and access to information in the region. Some parents in the community were concerned that the books encouraged children to engage with the material in a religious manner—specifically that the books will encourage children to read the Koran and pray to Mohammad. They are demanding that the books be removed from the third grade curriculum in the district.

Hood County, Texas

WIN: Following a packed community forum during which residents of Hood County spoke both for and against two LGBTQ-themed children's books in the local public library, county commissioners decided that *My Princess Boy* and *This Day In June* will remain on the shelves. CBLDF joined a coalition led by the Kids' Right to Read Project to send a letter in support of library director Courtney Kincaid, who refused to move the books out of the children's section.

Buncombe County, North Carolina

WIN: By unanimous vote, the Buncombe County school board decided to keep Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* in 10th grade English classrooms. Parent Lisa Baldwin objected to depictions of "homosexuality and sexually explicit scenes." Two review committees decided in favor of the book, and the county school board was the final arbiter of the challenge. CBLDF joined the Kids' Right to Read Project in sending two letters to Buncombe County to defend the book and to voice concerns about the district's policy to pull books from classrooms during challenges.

Charleston Principal Removes Book from Summer Reading List

Based on a complaint from one parent, the principal of West Ashley High School in Charleston, South Carolina, removed Courtney Summers' novel *Some Girls Are* as an option on a summer reading list for freshman honors English. Although the Charleston County School District's challenge policy says that the school board should make the final decision "based upon careful examination and study of the challenged material," WAHS principal Lee Runyon said he pulled the book this because "we felt like we needed to try to accommodate the parent's concerns, which had some validity, and make a common-sense decision."

In a letter to a local newspaper, parent Melanie MacDonald objected to the book's depiction of underage alcohol and drug use, sexual assault, a lecherous male teacher, "body shaming about the size of the lead character's breasts, and then a sexual reference so explicit that I will not reference it here." When MacDonald communicated her concerns to school officials, the WAHS English Department initially responded by adding a third option to the reading list: the 1943 classic *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*. Although MacDonald and her daughter had alternatives to *Some Girls Are*, she filed a formal challenge to the book, which should have triggered the formation of a review committee. But before that could happen, Runyon pulled it from the list and, in consultation with English teachers, replaced it with Laurie Halse Anderson's *Speak*, which explores themes similar to *Some Girls Are* and is itself a frequently challenged book.

Salman Rushdie: The World Has "Learned the Wrong Lessons" from *Charlie Hebdo*

In the wake of the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo*, some people continue to ask if free speech went too far. Award-winning author Salman Rushdie, on the other hand, says that the world has "learned the wrong lessons," and continues to stifle free speech out of fear.

Charlie Hebdo editor-in-chief Laurent Sourisseau recently announced that the magazine would no longer be focusing on publishing cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed. Although some parties have taken this declaration out of context and misinterpreted it as another French "surrender," the staff at *Charlie Hebdo* countered that they had covered the issue and stood up for free speech, so instead of "obsessing" on cartoons of Mohammad, they would move on to cover other topical issues.

In an interview with French newspaper *L'Express*, Rushdie said that such a mentality demonstrates that what people have learned from the attacks is not to exercise the right to free speech but instead to fear offending others. "What no one talks about is the fear," Rushdie said. "If people weren't being killed right now, if bombs and Kalashnikovs weren't speaking today, the debate would be very different. Fear is being disguised as respect."

Since the publication of his book *The Satanic Verses* in 1998, Rushdie has faced death threats and exile himself, while those who supported him were firebombed or killed. Based on his own experiences, Rushdie observes that events at *Charlie Hebdo* have left "deep divides" in the real and literary world. He comments that "we are living in the darkest time [he has] ever known," and he fears for the state of free speech when artists and writers are afraid to make non-violent comment on real social issues based on the chance that someone could be offended.

Rushdie asks, "Why can't we debate Islam? It is possible to respect individuals, to protect them from intolerance, while being sceptical about their ideas, even criticising them ferociously."

Find out more about these stories and get the latest news every day at www.cbldf.org!

Art by Vanesa R. Del Rey

CBLDF LAUNCHES LEGAL WRITING COMPETITION FOR EXCELLENCE IN COMIC BOOK SCHOLARSHIP

The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund is proud to announce its inaugural writing contest, the CBLDF Writing Competition for Excellence in Comic Book Scholarship. The competition is directed to current students at any U.S. law school and seeks writings about comic books and the comic book industry. The competition is directed by CBLDF Board of Directors member Dale Cendali, a partner at the law firm of Kirkland & Ellis LLP. The winner of the competition will have the opportunity to participate in a CBLDF presentation at the 2016 Comic-Con International in San Diego! The winner of will also receive a $500 cash prize and a complimentary annual membership to CBLDF!

Requirements

To participate, students should submit an original piece of legal writing addressing a legal issue or issues related to comic books, the comic book industry, or a matter that relates to or affects comics. Eligible applicants must be enrolled as either a full-time or part-time student at a U.S. law school. The writing must be the author's original creation (although it may be co-authored) and may be either an unpublished manuscript or a published article that was published no longer than one year prior to the competition deadline.

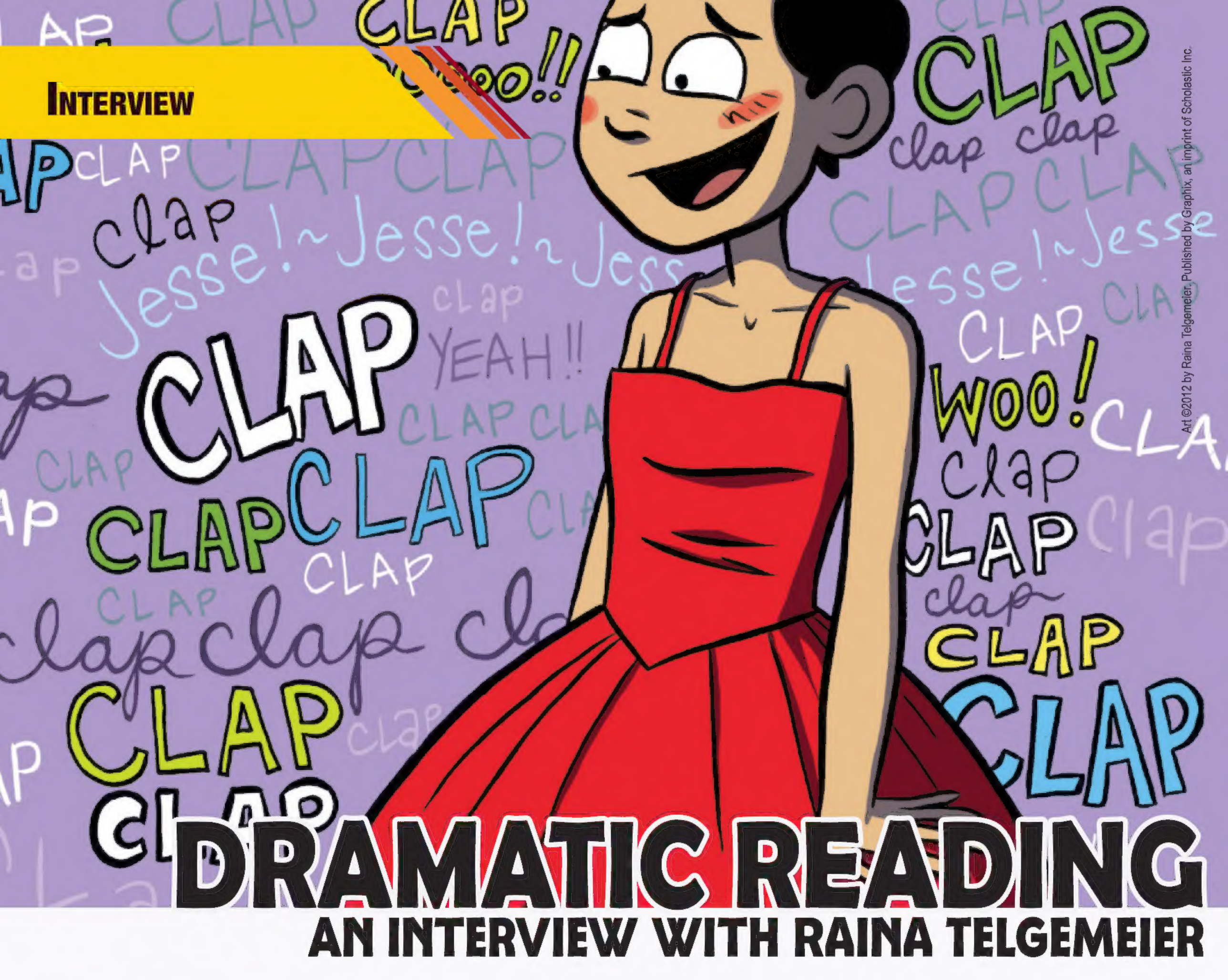
All submissions must be received by February 29, 2016. Along with their writing, entrants should provide their name, address, e-mail address, and the law school that they currently attend. Submissions and any questions should be sent to contest@cbldf.org.

Prizes

The competition's winner will be chosen by a panel of judges led by Cendali. The winner will be selected based on content, originality, timeliness, quality, and relevancy.

One grand prize winner will receive $500 cash prize and an annual membership to CBLDF. The grand prize winning paper will be prominently published on cbldf.org, and the winner will also earn a chance to present their work during a CBLDF panel at Comic-Con International 2016. CBLDF will furnish a badge for the winner and one guest.

Two runners-up will be selected from the competing papers. The runners-up will be published on cbldf.org, and they will receive a complimentary one-year membership to CBLDF.



DRAMATIC READING

AN INTERVIEW WITH RAINA TELGEMEIER

Raina Telgemeier has gathered a shelf full of awards, including several Eisners and the Stonewall Honor in children's and young adult fiction. Earlier this year, she also earned a less desirable distinction: a spot on the American Library Association's annual list of the ten most frequently challenged books. CBLDF snagged a moment from Raina's very busy schedule to talk about her work and censorship.

by Betsy Gomez

One of the really key things about your work, is that it's so highly relatable. The critics notice it, your fans notice it. Do you think that the comics format plays into this? Do you think comics make it easier to create a more relatable book than prose does?

Raina Telgemeier
(Photo credit: Marion Vitus)

I don't really know. I think it's just the writer and the types of things they're writing about and how much of that the audience can relate to. But comics of course have the added bonus of pictures, and I have sort of tried to think about how if you make a film based on a book or if you make a film about somebody's life story, you have to cast an actor in the role. It has to be a specific person. So when you're reading a comic, because it's a drawing of a person, you can sort of put yourself into the role that the person plays in the story. And I think that makes it a little bit easier to imagine yourself in the shoes of a character. So, I don't know, I've always thought comics sort of had a magical way of connecting reader to creator. Maybe that's part of it!

The American Library Association puts together a list of the ten most frequently challenged books, and on the 2014 list,* Drama *was the 10th most challenged book. How did you find out about* Drama*'s inclusion on the list?

I believe I found out about it from the CBLDF. I think Charles [Brownstein] emailed me and said, "Hey, you made the list. Congratulations!" And then, you know, the list got published and most of my peers—not all of them—but a lot of my peers are involved with books in some capacity, so there was a lot of excitement when it first happened. People congratulated me, and I kind of didn't know how to feel at first. Kind of like, I know that this is probably a good thing just because it gets the conversation into the mainstream, which I totally appreciate, but I also feel like I'm a book person and it's a little easier for me to speak through my work than it is to speak for myself. So, everybody wanted to talk to me about how I was feeling and what I thought about it and what it represented and I almost didn't have the words to explain myself. I felt like, "Well, I put all my thoughts and feelings into the book." And so that's the best representative of myself that I can give. But now that we've had some months and some time since the banning, I've obviously had a lot of chances to speak about it and to think about it and to process. And I think I'm just grateful, I'm just grateful not only that it happened, that the book got banned, but just the overwhelming support that has come out as a result of that happening. It's been nothing but a positive thing for me.

Now that you've had time to process it,* Drama *ended up on the list specifically because of a ban at an elementary school in Texas, and the ban was for sexual content. We weren't able to

find out anything more specific, but in all likelihood it looks like the ban pertains to the inclusion of gay characters and an on-stage kiss between two boys. How does that make you feel, your book being banned for sexual content?

Well, I know that most people wouldn't have even paid any attention to it if it had been a kiss between a boy and a girl, and, you know, I've had a lot of naysayers kind of attack me for having an agenda to push and having, you know, a hidden motive in writing this story because the cover doesn't say in giant letters: "There are gay characters in this book!" The word "Drama" does not appear as a giant rainbow. And there are some people that think that it should, and I say, "Well that would be a spoiler, so of course it shouldn't say it on the cover!" But for me, I mean, I was just writing about my own experiences and my own observations and my own friends that I really did see and experience and have in my life when I was in high school. So, you know. To me, that's just what it is.

Art ©2012 by Raina Telgemeier. Published by Graphix, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.

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"Sexually Explicit"

Drama was banned from a Texas elementary school library, most likely for a kiss between two male characters.

Drama ***isn't the first book to be attacked for the inclusion of LGBTQ content. Alison Bechdel's*** **Fun Home** ***is a frequent target. Recently, CBLDF signed a letter in defense of some books in Texas, where a church group was making an organized effort to have a pair of children's books featuring non-gender-conforming characters banned from a library. Why do you think LGBTQ content is such a frequent target of would-be censors?***

That's kind of hard to say, I think we're just, we're in a really transitional period right now between kind of an old mentality and people realizing that human beings are just that, and we're all different from each other. But we have certain things in common and, you know, why should you criticize one person for being who they are when you are who you are and vice versa? I don't know, I think it is a sign of progress, but it's just unfortunate that there are kids out there who are getting kind of swept under the rug as a result. So, you know, writing books for kids with LGBT content is I think super super super important.

Do you feel like the ban of **Drama** ***has had any impact on your work or might potentially have any impact on your work?***

I don't, and I think that—I've been really grateful for Scholastic's support along the way and for the support from all of my various networks including the CBLDF, just to kind of tell me that I don't have to worry about writing and I don't have to worry about censoring myself. And for me the story is everything. Like the book I'm working on now—there's no "content," there's no agenda, there's no anything. It's just the story, just like *Drama* was just a story. And I will hopefully be able to continue to write stories as they need to be told as my career goes forward.

If you have any final thoughts on censorship, on comics—let's hear them!

I think it's a little easier to ban comics because it's easier to just flip to page 37 and go, "Oh my gosh, can you see this thing? This is ridiculous, and I can't believe it!" But, you know, you can do that without reading any of the other context in the story. It's a little bit harder to do that with prose. You can single out prose very easily by saying there's a word in this book that I don't approve of, but with comics, it's right there in the pictures. I'm actually somebody who doesn't go for explicit content, and I don't enjoy seeing violence, and I don't enjoy seeing sex, and I don't enjoy seeing crudity in comics. So, I tend to read young, I tend to read kind, I tend to read sort of all-ages-friendly. I have no problem with people putting every single one of those things into their books, and I don't think anybody should stop them from doing it if that's their personal passion and what they feel the story needs to be. So, it's tricky. I write the kinds of books I like to read, I think other people should be allowed to do the same.

You can hear the full recording of this interview on the CBLDF Podcast, available now at www.cbldf.org!

THE DRAMA ABOUT *DRAMA*

Raina Telgemeier is well-known for work that appeals to tween and teen readers. So how did her book *Drama* end up banned?

The ban that landed *Drama* on ALA's list of frequently challenged books happened at Chapel Hill Elementary School in Mount Pleasant, Texas. That information was reported in the Texas ACLU's Annual Banned Books Report, but there was no news coverage, so details are thin. CBLDF did determine that the complainant claimed the book was "sexually explicit," most likely because it features gay characters and a kiss between two boys. *Drama* was removed from the elementary school's library, while three copies remain in Chapel Hill Independent School District's combined middle / high school library.

CBLDF could not locate a formal challenge procedure in school board policies, but there does appear to be some sort of review process because there is a document containing a challenge form and an assessment form for a review committee. CBLDF could not determine whether the district actually followed the review procedure, but it seems unlikely that even a majority of a review committee would objectively agree that *Drama* meets the stated criteria for removal of library materials found in district policy:

> *Students' First Amendment rights are implicated by the removal of books from the shelves of a school library. The District shall not remove materials from a library for the purpose of denying students access to ideas with which the District disagrees. The District may remove materials because they are pervasively vulgar or based solely upon the educational suitability of the books in question.*

Art ©2012 by Raina Telgemeier. Published by Graphix, an imprint of Scholastic Inc.

FIGHTING WORDS

Once again, CBLDF had a busy summer defending the right to read. With a new school year starting and Banned Books Week coming our way September 27 through October 3, 2015, we're drawing inspiration for the ongoing battle for free expression from some of our favorite comics creators!

Alison Bechdel

On the attempt to ban *Fun Home* from public libraries in Marshall, Missouri: My first reaction is: What a great honor! My second reaction is, it's a very interesting situation, and it's all about the power of images, which I think is something people need to talk about. I can understand why people wouldn't want their children to accidentally think this was a funny comic book and pick it up and see pictures of people having sex. I can understand that. I think banning books is the wrong approach. If you don't want your kids to read it, make sure they don't get a hold of it. But I do understand that concern, because yeah, drawings are very seductive and attention-catching. (Source: The Comics Journal #282)

On the controversy surrounding the use of *Fun Home* in an elective reading program at the College of Charleston: I'm very grateful to the people who taught my book at the College of Charleston. It was brave of them to do that given the conservative pressures they're apparently under. I made a visit to the school last fall for which they also took some flak, but to their great credit they didn't back down. It's sad and absurd that the College of Charleston is facing a funding cut for teaching my book—a book which is after all about the toll that this sort of small-mindedness takes on people's lives. (Source: Publisher's Weekly)

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Neil Gaiman
(Photo credit: Kimberly Butler)

NEIL GAIMAN

I wouldn't be who I am without libraries. I was the sort of kid who devoured books, and my happiest times as a boy were when I persuaded my parents to drop me off in the local library on their way to work, and I spent the day there. I discovered that librarians actually want to help you: they taught me about interlibrary loans. (Source: Neil Gaiman's personal website)

If you accept—and I do—that freedom of speech is important, then you are going to have to defend the indefensible. That means you are going to be defending the right of people to read, or to write, or to say, what you don't say or like or want said...

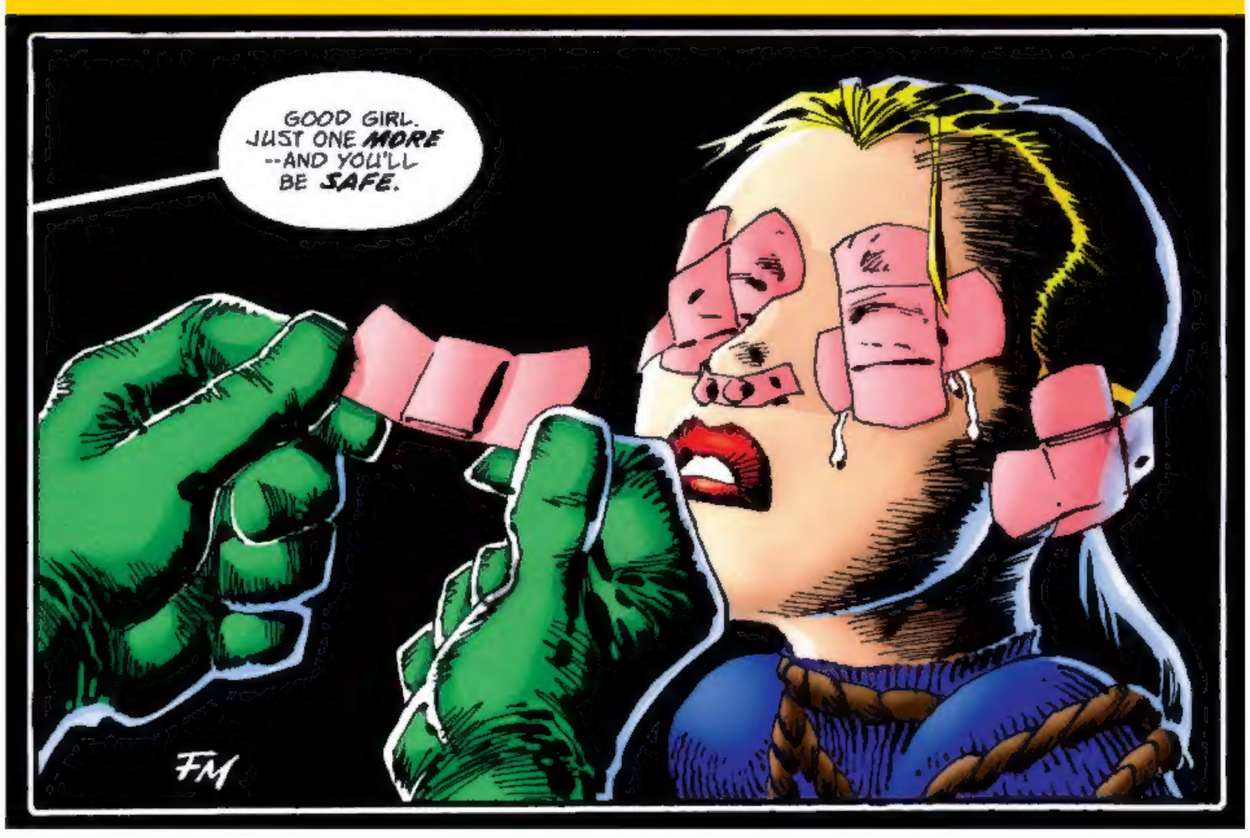
You ask, What makes it worth defending? and the only answer I can give is this: Freedom to write, freedom to read, freedom to own material that you believe is worth defending means you're going to have to stand up for stuff you don't believe is worth defending, even stuff you find actively distasteful, because laws are big blunt instruments that do not differentiate between what you like and what you don't, because prosecutors are humans and bear grudges and fight for re-election, because one person's obscenity is another person's art.

Because if you don't stand up for the stuff you don't like, when they come for the stuff you do like, you've already lost. (Source: "Why Defend Freedom of Icky Speech?", Neil Gaiman's personal website)

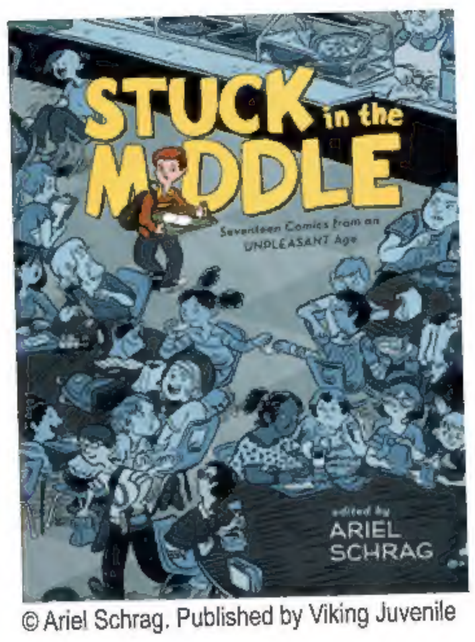
On Charlie Hebdo: *How important are free speech and satire? Important enough that people will murder others to silence the kind of speech they don't like. It's too easy to think that freedom of speech is an abstract thing. But the freedom to mock, to argue, to disagree, these are important enough that their opponents will do whatever they can to quash them, and that includes murder.* (Source: CBLDF)

FRANK MILLER

Anything that got between my brush and my drawing board was my enemy. Free speech has a long and honorable history in the United States. This is part of it. But as an artist, I can only say: Get the hell out of my way. (Source: CBLDF)



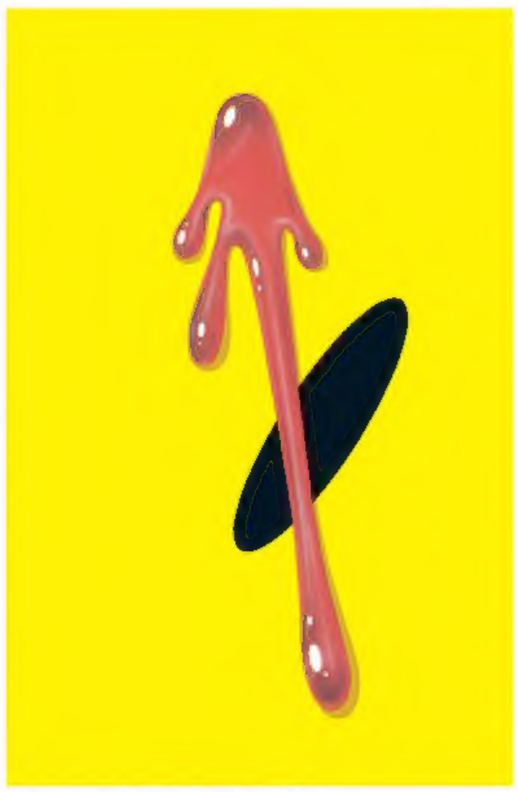
Ariel Schrag



© Ariel Schrag. Published by Viking Juvenile

Kids are going to find the content that they want to find, first of all, and I don't think children should be reading pornography. I wouldn't give it to my children. I don't know. I think it depends on the child, I think it depends on where you think they're at emotionally. I can only really say what I would do with my own child. What age would I give them [my book] *Potential*? I don't know—that would depend on who they were and if I thought they were ready, and if they read it before I thought they were ready, then I would talk to them about it to help them understand it. I think that's all you can really do. Kids are always going to get exposed to things before its ready. I mean, I watched *The Shining* at an eighth grade birthday party and was traumatized for two weeks. But that's expectable that teenagers watch horror movies at birthday parties, that's what they do and then for some of the teens, they're fine and some, like me, can't sleep for two weeks. The more important thing is to be a present parent and to be aware of what your child is reading or consuming and be there to talk to them about it if they need to. (Source: Shalom Life)

Alan Moore



Watchmen ™ and © DC Comics

Also, from my own personal point of view, as I said earlier, that I really do not think that we should restrict information to children. And I think that, basically, I know that there are a lot of parents that don't agree, would not agree with me upon that, and of course they have the right, but as long as it's kept upon a parental level, I'm not too worried. If parents are making the decisions that their children can or cannot read this sort of book in the home, that's fair enough. The parents can take the consequences of that. It won't necessarily stop the children reading it, but at least it's a transaction between the child and the parent and it's the parent taking responsibility for their children, which is fair enough. I take a more liberal stance in that I prefer to let my children read anything, but I want to know what they're reading, and if there's anything they come across which might be disturbing, then I'm always on hand to talk about it with them. Which, to me, seems to be the responsible attitude. (Source: The Comics Journal #118)

© Jeff Smith. Used with permission of Cartoon Books.

Jeff Smith

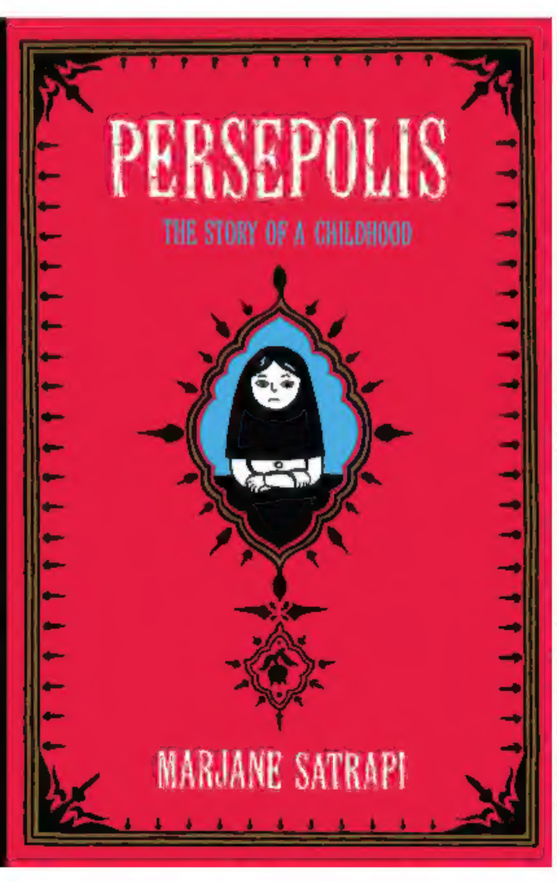
I learned this weekend that *Bone* has been challenged on the basis of "political viewpoint, racism and violence." I have no idea what book these people read. After fielding these and other charges for a while now, I'm starting to think such outrageous accusations (really, racism?) say more about the people who make them than about the books themselves. (Source: CBLDF)

MARJANE SATRAPI

The good thing is that these people who ban things, it's like they are completely unaware of what a human being is. If you want to make adolescents read a book, ban it! And then they all want to read it. Because then they're rebellious. Why not just explain it? It's not like kids are dumb. (Source: American Libraries Magazine)

On the Chicago ban: *It's shameful. I cannot believe something like this can happen in the United States of America... These are not photos of torture. It's a drawing and it's one frame. I don't think American kids of seventh grade have not seen any signs of violence. Seventh graders have brains, and they see all kinds of things on cinema and the Internet. It's a black and white drawing, and I'm not showing something extremely horrible.* (Source: Chicago Tribune)

On Charlie Hebdo: *People have the right to have a different point of view and to provoke. If we allow acts like this to create a climate of fear, we will have lost our freedom.* (Source: New York Times)



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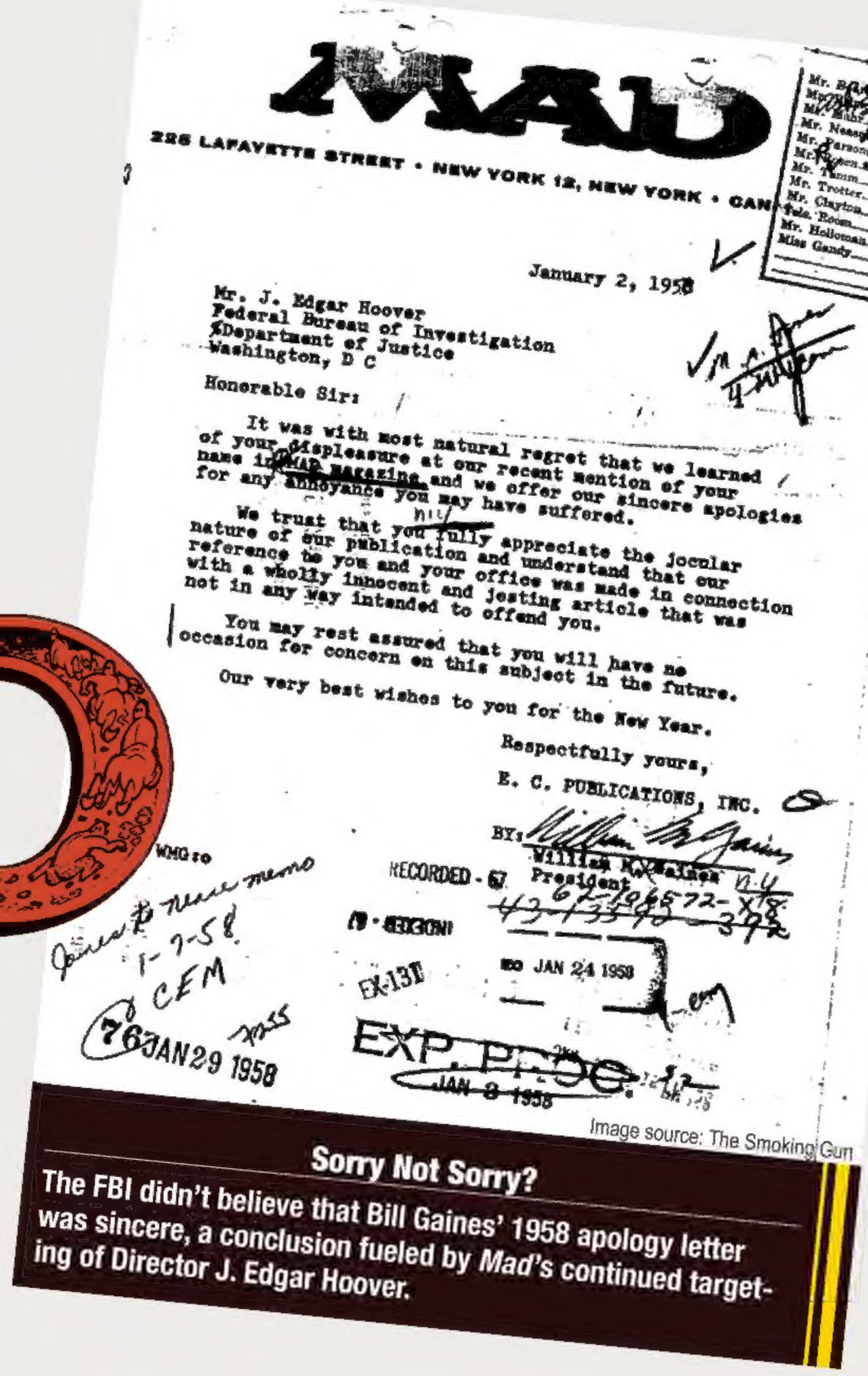
When the FBI got MAD

Mad Magazine has a reputation for thumbing its nose at, well, everyone. In 1957, they infuriated the nice folks at the FBI...


MAD

225 LAFAYETTE STREET • NEW YORK 12, NEW YORK • CAN

January 2, 1958

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Department of Justice
Washington, D C

Honorable Sir:

It was with most natural regret that we learned of your displeasure at our recent mention of your name in MAD Magazine and we offer our sincere apologies for any annoyance you may have suffered.

We trust that you fully appreciate the jocular nature of our publication and understand that our reference to you and your office was made in connection with a wholly innocent and jesting article that was not in any way intended to offend you.

You may rest assured that you will have no occasion for concern on this subject in the future.

Our very best wishes to you for the New Year.

Respectfully yours,

E. C. PUBLICATIONS, INC.

BY: William M. Gaines
William M. Gaines
President

WMG:ro

RECORDED - 67

EX-131

JAN 24 1958

EXP. PROC.

JAN 29 1958

JAN 29 1958

Image source: The Smoking Gun

Sorry Not Sorry?
The FBI didn't believe that Bill Gaines' 1958 apology letter was sincere, a conclusion fueled by *Mad*'s continued targeting of Director J. Edgar Hoover.

Our readers undoubtedly know about EC Comics publisher Bill Gaines' valiant but ineffective defense of comics during the 1954 Senate hearings investigating whether the funny books were leading children into a life of crime. But a collection of archival documents from a few years later highlight how Gaines and company continued to antagonize federal authorities—namely the FBI—during the glory days of *Mad* magazine in the 1950s and 1960s.

Gaines began publishing *Mad* in 1952 as a spoof of genre comics, but after the Comics Code Authority was instituted in 1954, he changed the publication to a magazine format in order to circumvent the CCA's censorious new restrictions. That's why a 1957 issue of *Mad* jokingly encouraged readers to write J. Edgar Hoover at the FBI to "request a membership card certifying themselves as a 'full-fledged draft dodger.'" At least three readers actually took on the tongue-in-cheek challenge, and the Bureau was unamused to say the least. In an internal memo, an agent identified only as M.A. Jones issued a dry critique of the magazine:

> *This book purports to satirize well-known comic figures, advertising, television and radio shows, well-known individuals, etc. However, it is extremely violent in its nature. It is also of interest to note that in its satirical treatment of famous historical incidents in American history it is rather unfunny.*

The memo even referred to Gaines' Senate testimony, noting that he "claimed to be the one who introduced horror comics" and "defended such publications while testifying." In fact, Hoover himself had also testified at the hearings and published an article in a nationwide Sunday newspaper supplement about "the evil influences of comics," even though he had to admit that the FBI could not draw any statistical link between comics and juvenile delinquency. The part Hoover played in pressuring the industry to self-regulate may well explain why Gaines and his "usual gang of idiots" at *Mad* continued to prod the Director in print for years afterwards.

According to M.A. Jones, the magazine's most grievous sin with the 1957 draft dodger gag was making a mockery of the FBI's patron saint:

> *Since the misuse of the Director's name will probably result in the receipt of many such letters as the attached three communications, and since the use of the Director's name is certainly in bad taste, it is felt we should have our New York Office contact the "Mad" offices to advise them of our displeasure and to insist that there be no repetition of such misuse of the Director's name. It is felt that the letters which are attached should not be acknowledged.*

When the New York agents made their visit to *Mad*, both Gaines and editor Al Feldstein were conveniently out of the office. The agents spoke to art director John Putnam, who assured them that "ridicule, harassment or harm was the last thing in the world intended for the Bureau or Director Hoover." Putnam promised that *Mad* would not misuse Hoover's name again, and Gaines followed up with a seemingly contrite apology letter on January 2, 1958.

Of course, *Mad* was soon back at it again. The March 1960 issue featured a spoof ad combining Hoover's name with that of a popular vacuum cleaner brand: "The Honorable J. Edgar Electrolux." M.A. Jones, apparently on permanent assignment to the *Mad* beat, sent out another internal memo, noting with indignation that

> *Obviously, Gaines was insincere in this promise since his magazine has again placed the Director in a position of ridicule and it is felt we should once more contact Gaines or another official and firmly and severely admonish them concerning our displeasure at the tasteless misuse of the Director's name.*

In 1961 *Mad* again displeased the Bureau by encouraging readers to complete a "writing exercise" and anonymously send it to local newspapers. The exercise began innocently enough, but ended with a demand for "$25,000 in unmarked bills." Once again a few readers actually carried out the task, and M.A. Jones wrote another memo. After an overview of the FBI's previous contacts with the magazine, Jones finally concluded that repeated upbraidings were not having the desired effect:

> *An official of this magazine was contacted by a Bureau official in December, 1957, to protest a tasteless reference to the FBI and despite assurances given at that time, they have continued to publish slurring remarks about the Bureau. In view of this situation it was deemed useless to protest all such irresponsible remarks to a magazine of this poor judgment and capriciousness.*

Although the FBI's humorless and prissy reaction to *Mad* is certainly amusing in itself, it also provides an illuminating reminder of the value of freedom of the press, even for satirical publications, which often tackle hot issues long before the mainstream media does. The fact that Gaines and others on *Mad*'s staff apparently had extensive FBI files is certainly concerning, but even the Bureau ultimately had to admit that there was no way it could stop "tasteless" publications from seeing the light of day.

Maren Williams

Mad Magazine logo, 1954-1967, by Harvey Kurtzman. Mad is ™ and © DC Comics.

Take a tour of CBLDF LIBERTY ANNUAL 2015

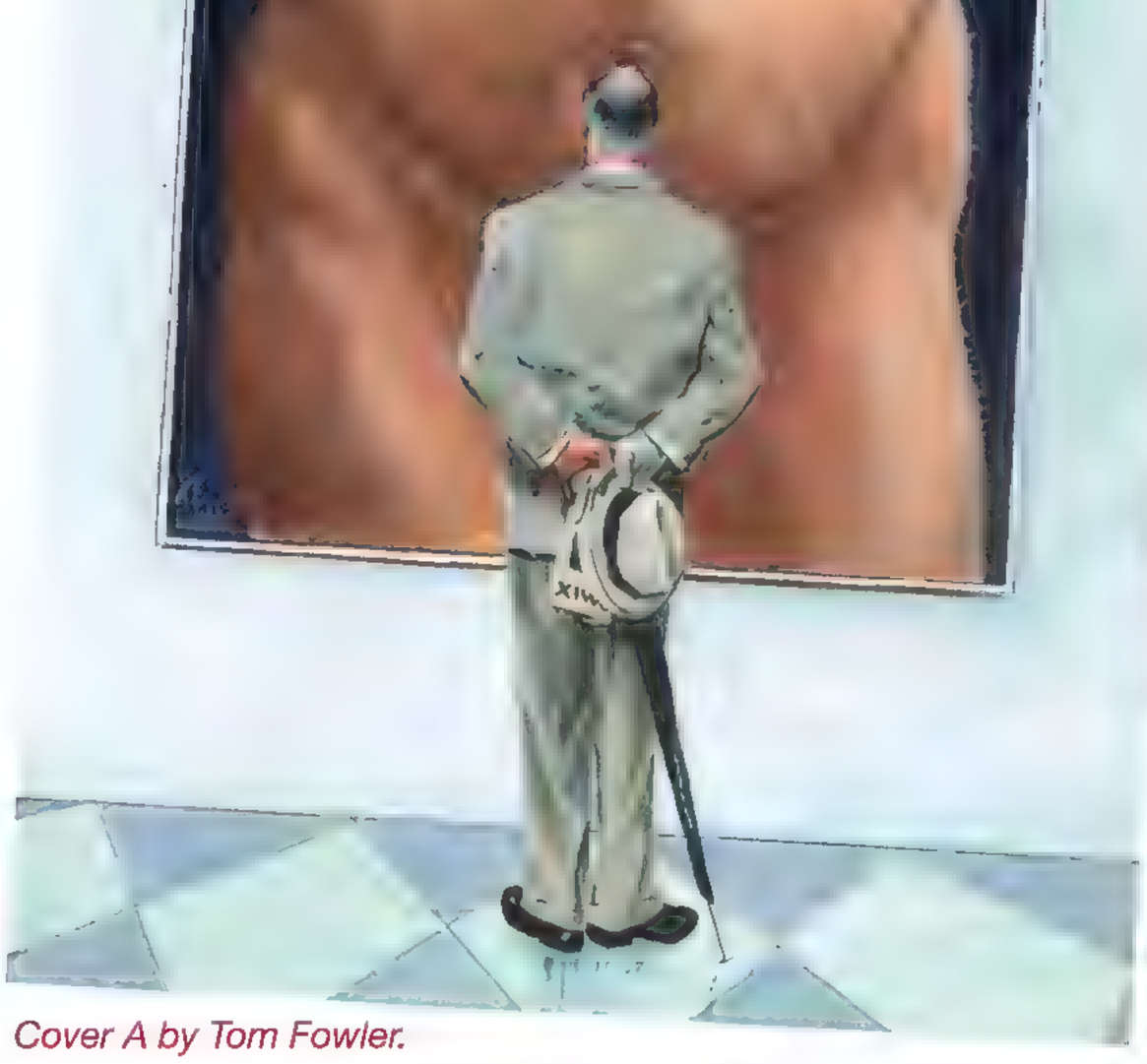
Editor DA Cox takes us on a walk through *CBLDF Liberty Annual 2015*, which will hit shelves October 7, 2015!

In the wake of the horrific murders at the *Charlie Hebdo* offices in France, one response that we noticed again and again was a knee-jerk reaction to their content that completely ignored the absurd and extremely biting level of satirical intent behind many of the *Hebdo* cartoons. When people reacted to work by the victims of a violent assault, there was a surprising amount of "Well, they shouldn't have drawn that," or "This magazine was offensive—they should have known this was coming." We realized that the national discourse in the U.S. hasn't had that level of print satire in many years, with *The Realist*, *Spy*, *National Lampoon*, and other publications having gone the way of the dodo.

We decided this was a great opportunity to turn the *CBLDF Liberty Annual* into a love letter to those magazines: ridiculous adult humor for adults, touching on topics that may not be suitable for polite company. Of course, the anthology isn't offensive just for the sake of being offensive, and there are literary parodies, heartfelt remembrances, and a few stories that are just plain silly. But we also touch on Satanism, prostitution, pornography, war, awkward sex, gratuitous violence, and all the other things that aren't typical fodder for punchlines.

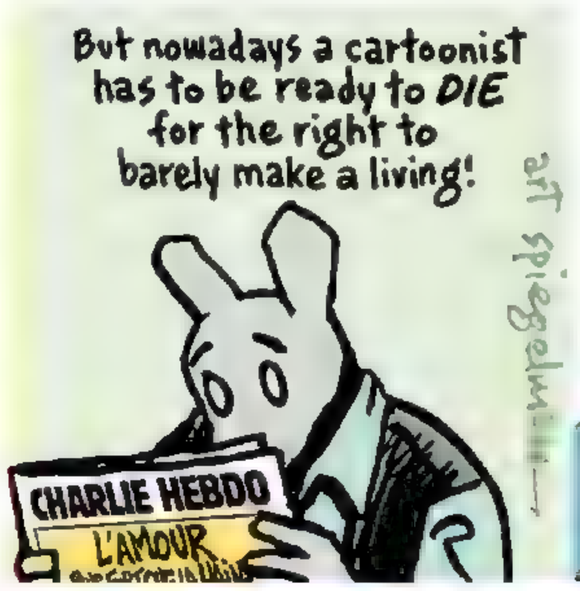
We found a group of contributors that I was thrilled to include in this project: **John Arcudi, Jeffrey Brown, Derek Charm, Tyler Crook, Vanesa Del Rey, Evan Dorkin, Nate Doyle, Duncan Fegredo, Bob Fingerman, Tom Fowler, Sina Grace, Gabriel Hardman, Eric Powell, R. Sikoryak, Gabe Soria, Art Spiegelman, Fred Van Lente,** and more...

It's a great sampler of talented people and, most importantly, funny people!


Free Speech
War on Naughtiness Dirty Stuff Scandals! Librarians reveal it all
The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund's
LIBERTY ANYOOL
FALL 2015 A HUMOR MAGAZINE 499 CENTS

Cover A by Tom Fowler.

Cover B art by Duncan Fegredo.


But nowadays a cartoonist has to be ready to DIE for the right to barely make a living!
art spiegelman
CHARLIE HEBDO
L'AMOUR

Art Spiegelman shares some "Notes from a First Amendment Fundamentalist" (r). John Arcudi and Tyler Crook take on the "Nude World Order" (b).

Back to School with Comics!

Today's graphic novels are far more sophisticated and varied in content than the comics that preceded them, which makes them the perfect classroom tool for educators!

Comic books are no longer the bastion of specialty shops and spinner racks at corner stores. They're one of the fastest-growing media formats, with traditional bookstores and libraries alike increasing the space alloted to graphic novels. They're also gaining widespread recognition, earning awards typically reserved for traditional books, such as the Pulitzer Prize, National Book Award, and the Caldecott and Newbery honors.

As comics have gained traction in the marketplace, they've also found a place in classrooms, offering educators ample opportunity to engage students of all abilities and interests. Whether you're teaching young students or the most advanced, there's a graphic novel that is certain to interest and engage them!

Common Core State Standards

After years of derision and misconceptions about the format, comic books have been gaining traction in classrooms. With the adoption and implementation of the Common Core State Standards in more than 40 states, comics have gained further validation: For the first time, nationwide educational guidelines have mandated the use of comics in the classroom! Because graphic novels are specifically mentioned in the Common Core, it's more difficult for administrators and parents to argue against their use in the classroom.

The English Language Arts (ELA) standards that specify the use of comics read as follows:

> *Grade 5, Standard 7: "Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., **graphic novel,** multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem)."*
>
> *Grades 6-12, Standard 10: "Includes the subgenres of adventure stories, historical fiction, mysteries, myths, science fiction, realistic fiction, allegories, parodies, satire, and **graphic novels.**"*

Reluctant Readers and ELL Students

Prose novels are a pretty intimidating proposition when you're a student who has difficulty reading or if you're learning a new language, like English. Comics offer shorter, more concise sections of text in conjunction with visual images that can help struggling readers and English language learners (ELL) contextually. The shorter text is less intimidating, and the images offer clues about the meaning of the words and ideas that students are reading. Further, comics by their very nature are eminently rereadable—students are more likely to revisit a comic, to read it again and again, providing repetition that reinforces ideas, vocabulary, and concepts.

Advanced Readers

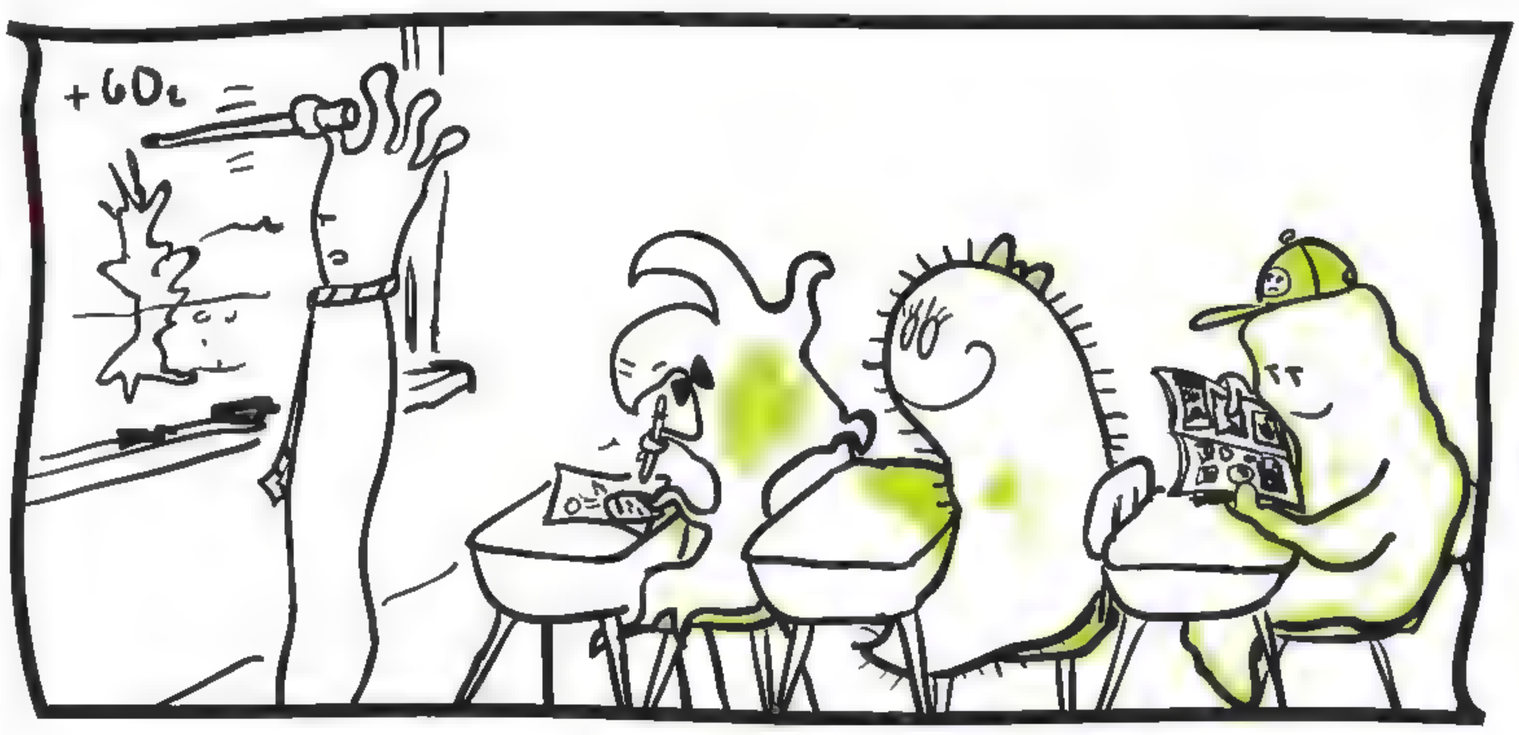
Struggling readers aren't the only students who benefit from graphic novels. Comics offer advanced readers a novel learning experience that they can't get from prose alone. Further, comics can be used to extend the learning experience and hold the interest of gifted students.

Integrated Learning

Curricula are increasingly integrating other subjects. For example, a science program may promote literacy by incorporating fiction, writing, and other language arts exercises. Or an English class might employ scientific and historical texts to reinforce or diversify the content that students encounter. Students also need to engage in other forms of learning, such as visual learning. With the wide variety of comics available—fiction, nonfiction, biographical, and yes, even science- and math-oriented titles—comics can be used in the classroom as part of an integrated learning program, engaging students in ways that reinforce learning.

Diversity

There's a lot of ongoing discussion about the lack of diversity in classrooms and reading materials. Comics are one way to expand the variety of educational materials available to students, both in terms of learning styles and in terms of content. Comics not only reinforce visual learning. They can also provide diverse viewpoints and ideas and can be used to engage populations that might otherwise be overlooked. Comics can be used to address topics such as civil rights, equal rights, LGBTQ issues, and much, much more.



Squish © Jennifer L. Holm and Matthew Holm. Published by Scholastic.

Tips for Using Comics in the Classroom

So exactly what can you do with comic books in the classroom? The possibilities are endless! Here are a few ideas:

- Adapt prose books into graphic novels.
- Complete-a-comic: Give students a comic strip in which some of the panels are not yet drawn, and ask them to finish the comic.
- Live performance: Assign roles, and have students read comics aloud, much like they would with a play.
- Have students make an all-original comic book.
- Journaling: Ask students keep a visual diary of their lives by having them draw a daily comic strip about what happened to them during the day.
- Blogging: Take journaling exercises online by having students write and create webcomics.
- Multimedia presentations: Integrate technology by encouraging students to create motion comics, video adaptations of comics, or animations.
- Paired reading: Have students read a comic book adaptation of a novel they just completed or pair a prose novel with a comic book that has a similar story or themes.
- Poster projects: Have students engage with comics in visual ways with posters and similar research projects.
- Art history: Have students investigate the artists who influenced the work of their favorite comics creator, or have them investigate the history of comic books.
- Creator visits: Invite comics creators, writers, and editors into your classroom (either in person or using online conferencing platforms) to talk about the process of making and publishing comics.
- Mini comic convention: Host your own mini version of Comic-Con in your classroom or at a local library. Invite creator guests, and have discussion panels and learning opportunities for your students and community.
- Cosplay: Encourage students to dress up as their favorite superhero or as an all-new comic book character.
- Museum / gallery visits: If a local museum or gallery is hosting a comics exhibit, take your students on a field trip!

If you're looking for more classroom ideas, be sure to visit cbldf.org, where we have resources for educators, librarians, and parents, including

- **Using Graphic Novels in Education,** CBLDF's semi-monthly column about a graphic novel that includes teaching tips, Common Core correlations, resources, and more (http://tinyurl.com/nbnwqbj).
- **Adding Graphic Novels to Your Library and Classroom Collection,** a series of articles about how you can add specific graphic novels to your classroom collection. Each article includes summaries, praise, awards and recognition, and other resources that you can use to justify the inclusion of graphic novels in your library or classroom. This resource can also be used to defend graphic novels against challenges and bans (http://tinyurl.com/ps2hu47).
- **CBLDF Discussion Guides,** a series of articles that summarizes and provides discussion questions about various graphic novels (http://tinyurl.com/oe8sl99).

In Case of Emergency

Given their visual nature, comics are uniquely vulnerable to challenges and bans. Most challenges to comics and books come from well-meaning individuals, frequently parents, who find something they believe is objectionable in their local public or school library or the classroom. These challenges are often difficult and stressful for the staff who must manage them, but CBLDF is here to help! Call **800-99-CBLDF** or email **info@cbldf.org** at the first sign of a First Amendment emergency!

Betsy Gomez

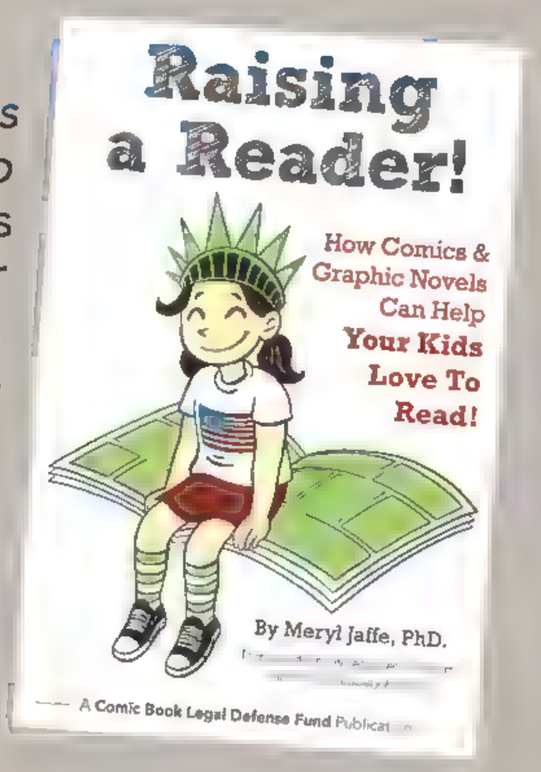
CBLDF has a number of tools and resources to help you in the classroom!

CBLDF Comics Connector

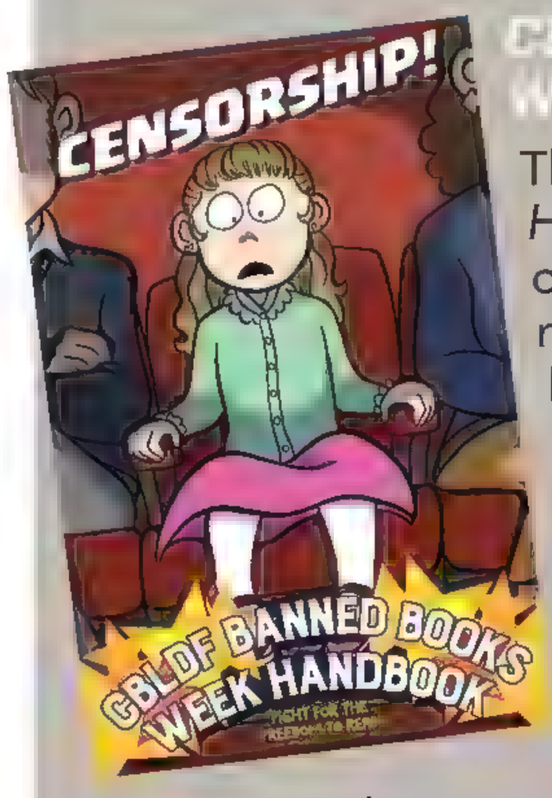
Check out CBLDF's newest resource for libraries and educators—the **CBLDF Comics Connector!** CBLDF's Comics Connector is a free resource that connects educators and librarians with creators, editors, and other comics professionals who are able to visit classrooms or libraries. Dozens of comics professionals have signed up with the CBLDF Comics Connector so far, and more will be added each week. View participating comics professionals by visiting http://cbldf.org/resources/comics-connector/

Raising a Reader!

Raising a Reader! How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love To Read! is CBLDF's signature resource for parents and educators! It's an indispensable tool for showcasing the value of graphic novels and chock full of reading suggestions and title recommendations to get young readers engaged with this exciting medium (starts at $5 donation for a bundle of 10, http://tinyurl.com/o9zrtsn)!


Raising a Reader!
How Comics & Graphic Novels Can Help Your Kids Love To Read!
By Meryl Jaffe, PhD.
A Comic Book Legal Defense Fund Publication

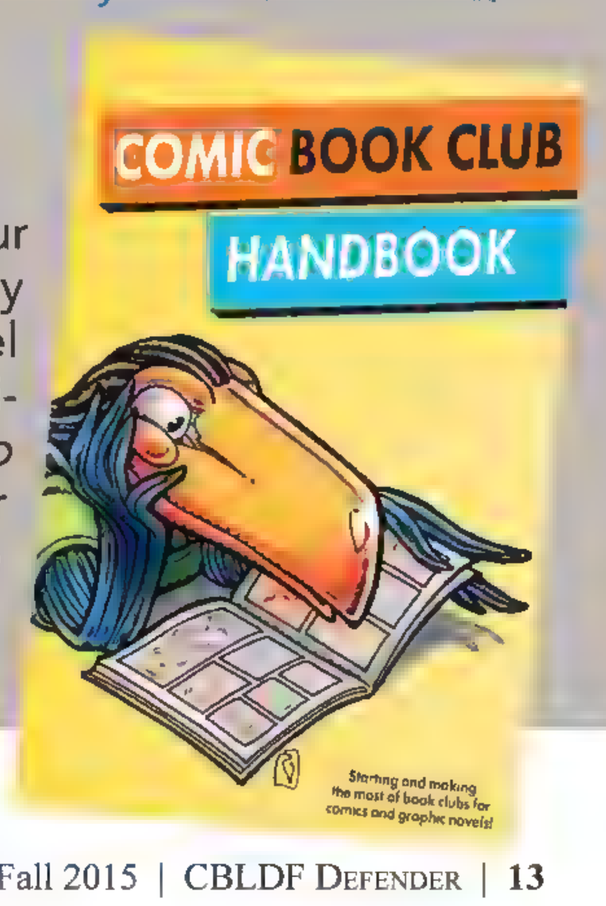
CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook



The *CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook* gives you the scoop on banned comics and how to make a celebration of Banned Books Week! It is an essential tool to assist librarians, educators, and retailers in planning Banned Books Week events, while also being a vital reference to help readers everywhere fight censorship. The 2015 edition features a cover by Raina Telgemeier. On shelves September 2, 2015! Bundles available now, starting at a $15 donation for 50 (http://tinyurl.com/otzahm9).

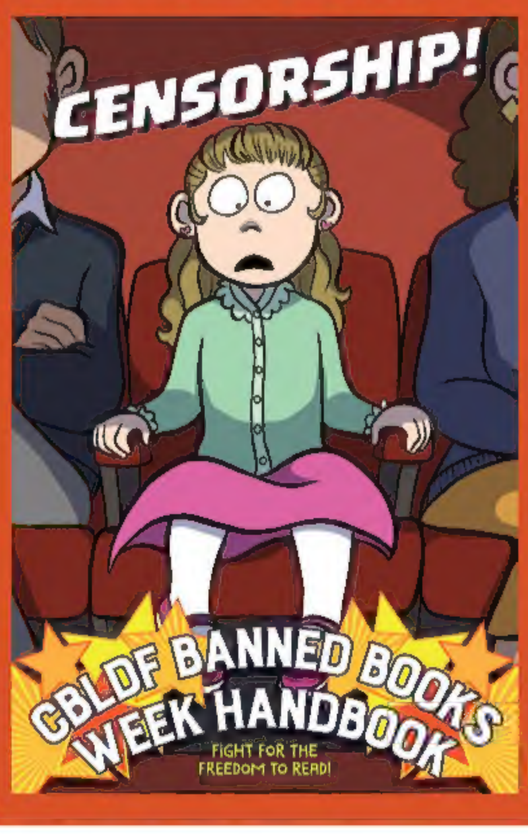
Comic Book Club Handbook

There's no need to limit your book club selections to only prose! Start a graphic novel book club in your community with the *Comic Book Club Handbook* ($3 donation or $10 donation for bundle of five, http://tinyurl.com/qflzb6t).



Fundraising

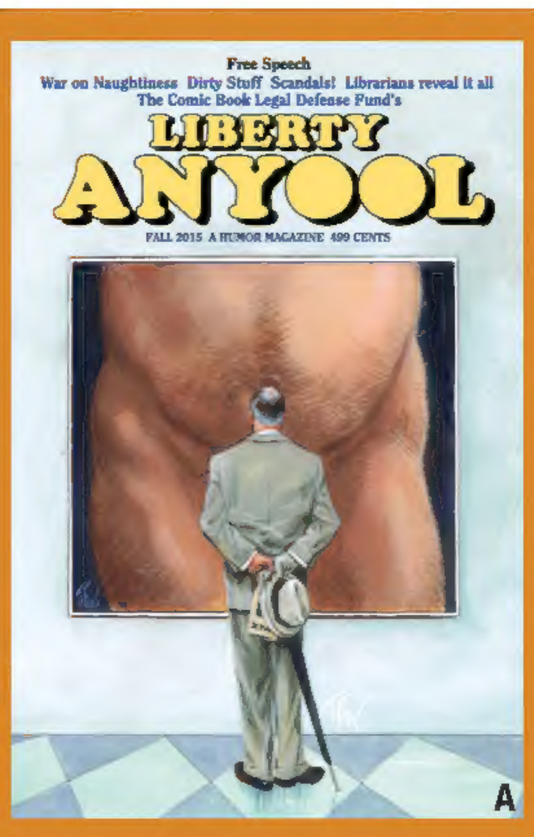
Coming Soon



CBLDF Banned Books Week Handbook 2015

Cover: Raina Telgemeier

Boasting a cover by Raina Telgemeier, America's most popular kids comics creator—and one of the most frequently banned! This resource reveals what comics are banned, how to report and fight censorship, and how to make a celebration of Banned Books Week in your community! **On shelves September 2, 2015! Bundles available now, starting at a $15 donation for 50 (http://tinyurl.com/otzahm9).**


Free Speech
War on Naughtiness Dirty Stuff Scandals! Librarians reveal it all
The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund's
LIBERTY ANYOOL
FALL 2015 A HUMOR MAGAZINE 499 CENTS
A

CBLDF Liberty Annual 2015

Art and story: Various

Cover A: Tom Fowler
Cover B: Duncan Fegredo
Cover C: Vanesa R. Del Rey

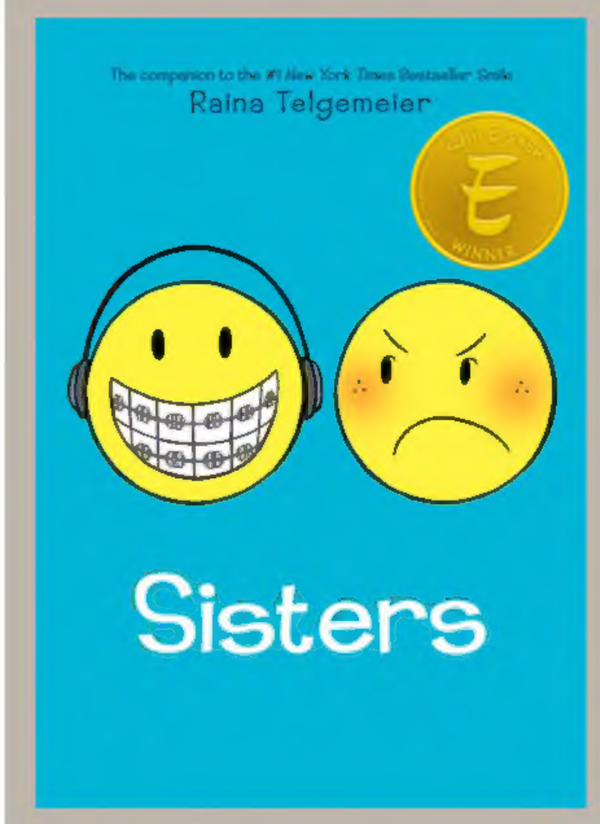
Pointed satire! Off-color parody! Bawdy laffs! Relive the days when adult humor magazines ruled the newsstand with the 2015 *CBLDF Liberty Annual*! An anthology of some of the funniest folks in comics—tipping sacred cows, writing stupid gags, and drawing the ridiculous! With an all-star lineup of talent that includes John Arcudi, Jeffrey Brown, Derek Charm, Tyler Crook, Vanesa R. Del Rey, Evan Dorkin, Nate Doyle, Duncan Fegredo, Bob Fingerman, Tom Fowler, Sina Grace, Gabriel Hardman, Eric Powell, Gabe Soria, Art Spiegelman, Fred Van Lente, and more, this 48-page monster benefits the free speech work of the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund! (Diamond order codes: cover A, AUG150482; cover B, AUG150483; cover C, AUG150484. Orders due 9/14/2015.)

On shelves October 7, 2015!

Rewards Zone Spotlight

Drawn by Michael Allred for the 2014 edition of *CBLDF Liberty Annual*, you can now display this full color 11" x 17" poster of Lady Justice! "Celebrate Banned Books Week!" in your home, office, or classroom! ($10 donation, http://tinyurl.com/qzqeldb)

For DEFENDER Readers



If you enjoyed this issue of *CBLDF Defender*, check out these premiums, available at special donation levels exclusively for *CBLDF Defender* readers! Your support makes *CBLDF Defender* possible!

Sisters

Raina Telgemeier uses her signature humor and charm in both present-day narrative and perfectly placed flashbacks to tell the story of her relationship with her younger sister, a tale that unfolds during the course of a road trip from their home in San Francisco to a family reunion in Colorado.

The companion to Telgemeier's bestselling and Eisner Award-winning graphic memoir *Smile*, this hardcover graphic novel comes signed on the title page by Telgemeier! ($25 donation, http://tinyurl.com/pfxtkx8)

Bake Sale

Sara Varon returns with an ageless tale as dreamy and evocative as her break-out hit graphic novel *Robot Dreams*. At once deeply metaphorical and hilariously literal, *Bake Sale* is a story for anyone who's ever looked for an easy answer to life's intractable difficulties. It's also a cookbook: Varon includes seven delicious recipes, from classic cupcakes to sugared flower petals to marzipan.

These exclusive copies of *Bake Sale* have been signed by Varon. ($20 donation, http://tinyurl.com/nc5sl8x)

Comic Book Club Handbook

There's no need to limit your book club selections to only prose. Many—if not most—graphic novels are as appealing and as discussable as traditional book club selections! Start a comic book club in your community with the *Comic Book Club Handbook*, written in partnership with Comic-Con International and available exclusively from CBLDF! ($3 donation or $10 donation for bundle of 5, http://tinyurl.com/qflzb6t)

CBLDF Coat of Arms T-Shirt

Featuring the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund's official coat of arms and the Comics Code Authority Seal of Approval, this all-new shirt was designed by comics superstar Brian Wood (*DMZ*, *Star Wars*, *Demo*) and was released during Comic-Con International 2015. Now available to all CBLDF supporters, this t-shirt is perfect for any comic defender to wear proudly! ($25 donation, http://tinyurl.com/ono8lnm)

RADIO FREE COMIX!

CBLDF is now part of the audio-sphere! A mix of interviews, discussions about censorship, convention panel recordings, and archival materials, the CBLDF Podcast is a monthly event, from our keyboards to your ears. The CBLDF Podcast is made possible in part by a donation from the Gaiman Foundation and member support.

Listen at http://cbldf.org/podcast/

JOIN THE FIGHT!

Joining the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund puts you on the front lines of the fight against censorship! When you join CBLDF, we'll thank you with the best incentives and benefits in the free speech community, starting off with a stunning membership card by cartoonist Michael Cho! We have membership plans for donors in every budget, and all of them are tax-deductible:

- **Member ($100):** CBLDF membership card, a button set, a sticker set, an embroidered patch, and an exclusive member-only t-shirt featuring Michael Cho's gorgeous art!
- **Associate Member ($30):** CBLDF membership card and a CBLDF bumper sticker!
- **Supporter Member ($50):** CBLDF membership card plus a button set, a sticker set, and an embroidered member patch!
- **Defender Member ($250):** All of the above, plus a subscription to *CBLDF Defender*, a coffee mug, and a canvas tote bag!
- **Protector Member ($500):** All of the above, plus an exclusive embossed executive Moleskine journal and a gym bag!
- **Champion Member ($1,000):** All of the above, plus recognition in the next *CBLDF Liberty Annual* and a CBLDF publication assortment that includes variant covers and assorted printed matter!
- **Guardian Member ($2,500):** All of the above, plus special recognition in CBLDF publications throughout 2015!

Use the signup form on the back cover of this magazine or visit http://cbldf.myshopify.com/collections/memberships to join today!

UPCOMING EVENTS

September 19–20: Small Press Expo
- http://www.spxpo.com/

September 25–27: Baltimore Comic-Con
- http://baltimorecomiccon.com/

September 27–October 3: Banned Books Week
- Celebrate young adult books during Banned Books Week 2015! The annual celebration of the freedom to read will be observed in libraries, schools, bookstores, and other community settings across the nation!
- http://bannedbooksweek.org/

October 8–11: New York Comic Con
- http://www.newyorkcomiccon.com/

Schedule subject to change. Visit cbldf.org for updates.

Art by Michael Cho

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